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Mr Michael Chambers
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Chambers

Short inspection of Coppull Primary School and Children's Centre

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors and leaders are united in their ambition for the school and this is starting to take effect in all aspects of provision. Since your appointment in January 2016, you have effectively tackled the weakest teaching and have a committed and supportive team. Together with your deputy headteacher, you are providing inspirational leadership for the parents, pupils and staff in the school. You have created a culture in which staff do not make excuses. You know the school well and acknowledge that the school, while good, can develop further.

Your approach means that the school engages well with external partners to provide for the needs of pupils. The wide range of support and early help that you provide ensure that pupils feel safe in the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and hold the school in the highest regard.

You have successfully built on many of the strengths highlighted in the previous inspection report. Pupils are respectful, courteous and well behaved. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils are fully engaged in lessons. This was exemplified in a Year 2 phonics lesson where pupils thoroughly enjoyed their learning because of the way that the work was presented by staff. You have

successfully developed a more engaging curriculum which has introduced topics such as the Year 6 'survival' topic where pupils tasted berries, mealworms and queen leaf ants in order to fully understand their work. The learning environment is bright and welcoming and encourages pupils to learn.

Your team of pastoral staff, whose work is closely connected to the children's centre, is successfully improving attendance. For example, the addition of the popular early breakfast club ensures that many pupils are on site before the start of the school day.

A key focus of the inspection was to look at how the school is challenging the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics. The school's focus has been on achieving the expected standard for the majority of pupils by the end of key stage 2. Although this is an important part of the school's work, we agreed that there has not been enough emphasis on challenging pupils to achieve beyond this standard.

At present, leaders' use of the pupil premium grant provides much needed support to tackle pupils' barriers to learning. However, leaders have not defined how the use of the grant is to make a difference to the achievement of the most able disadvantaged pupils. As such, governors do not have the information that they need to fully evaluate the use of the pupil premium funding.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding of pupils is a strength of the school. You and the school's leaders provide a wide range of strategies which include relationship-building activities and individualised support for pupils. The school has good links with the local crisis team. The vigilance of leaders and staff, and their knowledge of the pupils in their care, identifies well potentially vulnerable pupils. It also supports families who are experiencing difficulties. Thorough monitoring and early identification of pupils' needs is exceptional. All staff are fully committed to the safety of pupils and share this proactive approach.

Regular staff updates and training ensure that all staff have up-to-date information about pupils' needs and changes in legislation. Staff have received training on extremism and radicalisation and are alert to any signs.

Pupils feel safe and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many of the parents I spoke to commented positively on the school's pastoral care and its commitment to treat each pupil as an individual. Records relating to safeguarding are held securely and are organised well. Pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire, for example, and fully understand the precautions they must take when using the internet. They know that they can approach any adult at any time for support. Pupils are reflective, thoughtful and accepting of others and fully reflect the caring ethos of the school.

Inspection findings

- You, senior leaders and governors have a shared ambition for the school. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. As we agreed, the school development plan lacks a clear focus on measurable outcomes, such as for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, leaders are not able to fully evaluate the success of their actions to improve outcomes for these groups.
- From very low attainment on entry to the school, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils' phonics skills at the end of Year 1 have improved over the last three years, but they are still lower than national averages, especially for disadvantaged pupils. In their reading, pupils consistently apply strategies to break up words into their different sounds; they persevere very well when reading. However, sometimes the texts pupils are given are too difficult for them to understand.
- You have taken effective steps to introduce a more engaging curriculum. The success of this action is evident in pupils' positive responses to their learning in class and in the work they produce in their topic and display books. These books, for example, reflect some of the practical aspects of the curriculum, such as making papier mâché planets, den building and your themed European languages day. In science there is a clear focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. Work in Year 6 books, for example, showed pupils could explain how light travels and how eyesight works. Pupils have insufficient opportunities in topic work to use their mathematics skills.
- Pupils are reflective and accepting of each other's differences. They understand the need to accept everyone for who they are. Pupils commented on the very good behaviour in school and this is borne out by the conduct of pupils who I observed at lunchtime. Pupils commented confidently on the proactive response of staff to any of their concerns. They agreed that bullying is extremely rare.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved in lessons. Parents speak positively about provision at the school, saying that 'everyone matters, everyone is valued'.
- Arrangements for pupils who are looked after are effective. One carer described the school as 'a haven for children' who are in care.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged in their work by:
 - making sharper use of the school's systems to track pupils' progress

- ensuring that targets set for these pupils are specific and measurable.
- the school's pupil premium strategy is focused on raising pupils' achievement by:
 - setting clear targets for the use of the grant
 - governors knowing fully the impact of the grant on pupils' outcomes.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher, the safeguarding leader, the attendance leaders and three members of staff. I met with eight members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I considered the responses from 11 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I visited all classrooms, jointly with a senior leader, to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. I also scrutinised pupils' mathematics, science and topic books from a number of classes. I considered a wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, health and safety, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding.

Several lines of enquiry were pursued during the inspection. These included how effectively leaders target the use of the pupil premium grant to support pupils' progress and how well teachers challenge the most able pupils. They also included how effectively the teaching of phonics enables pupils to read and the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.